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July 9, 2012

The Honorable Willy Telavi
Prime Minister of Tuvalu
c/o The Permanent Mission of Tuvalu to the United Nations
800 2nd Avenue, Suite 400-D
New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It is my understanding that the Government of Tuvalu has permitted the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) to reflag as many as 22 vessels under the Tuvalu ship registry, allowing them to remain under NITC ownership and continuing to transport Iran's crude oil exports. This has the effect of assisting the Iranian regime in evading U.S. and EU sanctions and generating additional revenues for its nuclear weapons program and its support for international terrorism.

It would be profoundly disappointing to me if your government has acted in contravention of the broad international coalition that is working together to use peaceful means, including economic sanctions, to change the threatening behavior of the Iranian regime.

I respectfully request that your government cancel the registry of all NITC vessels. Given the close and cooperative relationship that our two governments now enjoy, it would be unfortunate if this action were permitted to stand.

It would be preferable that Tuvalu take this action of its own accord. However, your government should take note of President Obama's Executive Order 13608, signed May 1, 2012, which provides for the imposition of sanctions on any entity worldwide, including foreign governments, that assists Iran in evading U.S. sanctions. In my view, reflagging Iranian oil tankers falls within the scope of sanctionable activity under that Executive Order.

I appreciate your attention to this important matter and urge your government to cancel the registry of all NITC vessels as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Howard L. Berman

HOWARD L. BERMAN
Ranking Member